



NEWS RELEASE

from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

February 27, 1996

Ken Burton 202-208-5634
Megan Durham 202-208-4685

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE ISSUES REVISED LIST
OF "CANDIDATES" FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has issued a notice of review for plant and animal species that are candidates for listing as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The revised list of "candidate species"--part of the Administration's commitment to improve implementation of the Endangered Species Act--is the result of a thorough review of the scientific information available on the species. In its notice of review, published in the February 28 Federal Register, the Service is asking for any new information on the status of the candidate species.

"The revisions to the candidate species list strengthen the scientific basis of the endangered species program," said Service Deputy Director John Rogers. "The new candidate species list clearly identifies those species with strong scientific evidence indicating they are likely to be in need of listing as endangered or threatened. This will enable the Service, other agencies, and private partners to focus attention and resources on the species that most need help and will therefore, ultimately reduce the costs and increase the effectiveness of species conservation."

The revised candidate notice identifies 182 species as "candidates" for listing. "Candidate species" are species for which the Fish and Wildlife Service has enough scientific information to warrant proposing them for listing as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Identification of candidate species helps resource managers alleviate threats and thereby possibly remove the need to list species as endangered or threatened. Conservation actions for candidate species are often the most effective and least expensive means for restoring species.

The revised candidate list replaces an old system that listed nearly 4,000 "candidate" species under three separate categories. The old system led many people to the mistaken conclusion that the addition of thousands of species to the endangered list was imminent. Under the revised list, only those species for which there is enough information to support a listing proposal will be called "candidates." These were formerly known as "Category 1 Candidate Species."

Office of Public Affairs
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240
Room 3447

(202) 208-5634
FAX (202) 219-2428

With today's announcement, the Service will no longer maintain a list of species formerly known as "Category 2 Candidates." These are species for which the Service does not have enough scientific information to support a listing proposal. The Fish and Wildlife Service is working with Federal and state agencies, private conservation groups, and the scientific community to develop data sharing arrangements and continue to assess the status of these species.

"The Fish and Wildlife Service remains concerned about many of the species formerly on the 'Category 2 Candidates' list, and will continue working with states and others to gather information about these and other species that may be at risk," Rogers said. "However, we currently do not have the type of information needed to warrant a candidate designation for these species."

In the 22-year history of the Endangered Species Act, the Fish and Wildlife Service has listed 960 U.S. species as endangered or threatened but has determined that 2,400 others do not warrant protection at this time. Over 70 percent of all species reviewed were found not to warrant listing.

None of the current candidate species is likely to be listed as endangered or threatened in the near future because of an April 1995 Congressional moratorium on adding new species to the official list. Proposals to list species also have been delayed by reductions in the Service's endangered species budget. The Service is continuing efforts to stabilize the status of candidate species through conservation partnerships but Congress has also cut funding for this program.

Also in the February 28 Federal Register is a notice explaining the changes in the status of 96 candidate species under the terms of a settlement agreement in a lawsuit filed by the Fund for Animals. This notice explains that scientific review has indicated these 88 plants and 8 animals do not warrant proposal for listing as endangered or threatened. Most of the species were removed for taxonomic reasons, because of a lack of scientific information to support a proposal, or because they are more abundant or less threatened than previously believed. Several of the species were removed from "candidate" status as a result of successful conservation actions that have reduced threats and stabilized their populations. Two species, both Hawaiian plants, were removed because they are believed to be extinct.